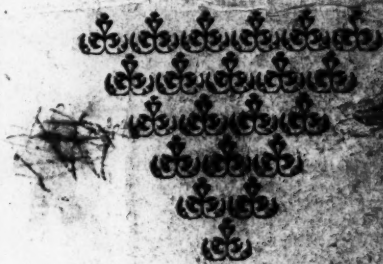


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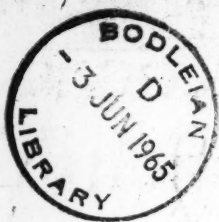


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# Instructions

FOR

# YOUTH.

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## S E C T. I.

*It is necessary, that Youth follow  
Advice in Temporals and Spi-  
rituals.*

Q. **W**hat Reasons have you for offering  
these Instructions to Youth?

A. I offer Instructions to Youth, be-  
cause, I think, they want them: And I  
offer them in short, that those, who have  
not much Patience to be Serious, may not

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be frighted with the Volume, but from this hint, be encourag'd to read other Books already publish'd of a larger Bulk.

*Q. Why do you think they want Instruction?*

*A.* The Scripture gives the reason ; because *The Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth*, Gen. 8. 21. and because *It is good for a Man, that he bear the Yoke in his Youth*, Lamen. 3. 27.

When the Inclinations to Evil begin to work, and with strong impulses push Youth on towards that Corruption, which with so many appearing Charms begins to flatter their Age: When Custom and Example give Authority to what is Vicious, and with powerful Arguments invite them to take part in what is so agreeable to Nature: When daily Conversation is possessing their Minds with very false Ideas of all that belongs to this World, and the next, in raising a great Opinion of the one, and bringing the other into Contempt: When thro' their want of Experience, thro' the Rashness of their Years, and little Skill in discerning Counterfeit from Substantial Goods, they are in so much danger of being deceiv'd, there can be no reason to ask, why they want Instruction ; since the only looking on their Circumstances , shews the Necessity of  
some



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some Care, for securing them against those very considerable Mischiefs, which threaten.

Then again, when a sad Experience gives Evidence, how very difficult it is for Persons, grown up in Disorders, to correct the Errors of their Youth: When the Advantages of early Discipline are so well known, and the Impression of Sound Principles in youthful Years, is such a Barr against Corruption, contributes so much to a Life of Virtue, and renders it so easie, there cannot be so much reason to enquire, Why Instructions are prepar'd for Youth, as to conclude, that where due Care is not us'd by Parents or Tutors, for seasoning the Minds of Youth with Solid Principles, such as may prepare them against the Delusions of this World, and put them upon being Industrious for gaining the Happiness of the next, such Persons are without true Faith, they can have no Hopes of Salvation, and the Love of God is not in them.

*Q. I am satisfied. What now is the first Instruction, you would give to Youth?*

*A.* The same I would give to an unskilful Traveller, that is to go thro' difficult and dangerous ways, where a Mistake is attended with the hazard of Life: I would advise them to take a Guide; that is, to

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find out some Experienc'd, Discreet and Pious Person, in whose Sincerity and Judgment they can have an entire Confidence, and then to consult him in all Doubts, and take his Advice in whatever can be suspected as dangerous.

*Q. Will not this be so great a Restraint, as to render the Instruction impracticable?*

*A.* It will be a Restraint; but when the Indiscretions and Heats of Youth are such, as to make a Restraint Necessary, it is not this Restraint should render it impracticable, but rather be an Argument for recommending its Practice. Is it not plain, that all the Dangers of Youth are occasion'd by their Rash engaging in what is not fitting, and by being drawn into Mischiefs, without any suspicion of the Snare, till they are caught? Now what Remedy or Prevention can there possibly be, but in something, that may keep them within Bounds of more Security? This may have something Ungrateful in it, but 'tis only to streighten the Liberty of doing themselves a Mischief, and ought to be as welcome, as the Fortifications and Lines to a Town Besieg'd, which confine the Inhabitants, but 'tis only to prevent their being surpriz'd by their Enemies. You know, what the Advantage is, in having Bars on each side of a Narrow Bridge:

These

## *Instructions for Youth.* 7

These streighten the way, but it being only to hinder the Passenger from stepping into the Stream, such a Confinement is no Aggrievance, but has Necessity or Convenience to answer all Objections, and take off the Uneasiness of a Restraint.

*Q. Fortifications to a Town Besieg'd, and Bars to a Bridge, are Welcome, because they secure a Man from what he most fears; but the Restraint, you prescribe, is like to prove a Curb upon Youth, in regard of what they are most inclin'd to, and with earnestness desire; and can this be Welcome?*

*A.* I plead not for its being Welcome, at first at least, but only Necessary, and your Exception is the best Proof; for if Persons are either so Blind or Mad, as to be willing to run into the Water, this shews the Necessity of having the Bridge fenc'd with Bars, where they are to pass over: And since you own, that Youth are push'd on both with Inclinations and Desires, to what is most destructive to them, does not this prove the Necessity of having some Restraint upon them, for preventing their running into those Mischiefs, which either they do not see, or, at least, not apprehend? This is the reason, why I prescribe a Guide to them, in all their Ways, that by his Advice, they may be inform'd of Dangers, and

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by his Discretion, be secur'd against them.

*Q. In what would you have them consult such a Guide?*

*A.* In all that belongs to Humane and Christian Life; that is, in all that regards Business, Company, Conversation, Diversions, Expences, &c. for in these being the first steps, that lead to the Precipice of open Vice, there can be no Safety, but in being Directed. I would have them with all Sincerity, lay open their Heart and Soul to him, their Inclinations, Affections, Desires, Temptations, Passions; because a Life of Virtue depending on the Management and good Government of these, there can be no hopes of their being secur'd against the dangerous subtilties of the Devil, the World, and their own Corruption, if these are kept a secret. I would have them take directions from him, as to the Methods, Rules and Exercises, proper for strengthening them against whatever Weaknesses appear, and for preparing them against such Assaults, as are likely to be made against them.

*Q. This would do very well; but where is such a Guide to be found, whose Fidelity and Discretion fit him for such Conduct?*

*A.* As to what concerns the Temporal, there may be found Lay-Persons, whose Sincerity

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Sincerity and Experience qualifie them for such a Friendly Office. But as for the Oeconomy of the Soul, this ought to be the Province of another Rank; for since God has given to Pastors the Charge of Souls, these, to follow the Order of heaven, ought to be under their Care; and tho' there may not be Encouragement to make choice of the First we meet; yet certainly there cannot be wanting, in that Character, some, whose Piety and Prudence may raise them above Suspicion, and recommend them to our Choice. Whatever the Scarcity be, I believe the greatest difficulty will not be so much in finding a Guide duly qualified, as in perswading Youth sincerely to submit themselves to his Conduct. The Violence of Passion, join'd with an excessive Confidence in their own Discretion and Strength, and with the Fear of being controul'd in their most eager Desires, will put in great Objections in favour of Inclination; but they, who find Advice Reasonable in all other Concerns, even in their Games, in the Purchase of a Horse, a Dog, or of Cloaths, need no other Evidence, but themselves, for condemning the Contempt of Advice here, in a matter of the greatest Consequence and Difficulty, as Irrational and Criminal; especially, since they have

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So many Instances of Youth overtaken with early Ruin, to convince them of their Rashness, in confiding so much in themselves, and declining all Direction, which might be their Security.

'Tis by this Instruction then of being Advis'd, Youth may walk with the Conduct of the most Experienc'd Years; but if they follow it not, let them remember afterwards, whence to Date their Misfortunes. 'Tis one Character of the Wicked Woman in the Proverbs, that She *forsaketh the Guide of her Youth*: And the late Complaint of the Ruin'd Man is; *How have I hated Instruction, and my heart despis'd Reproof! And have not obey'd the voice of my Teachers, nor inclin'd my ear to them that instructed me!* Prov. 5. 12. Those then, who are afraid of the same ill Fate, have no surer way than to avoid those ill Steps, which by the Holy Spirit are here declar'd the Steps to Ruin.

S E C T. II.

*Their Minds are to be early possess'd with the True Ideas of Temporal Things.*

Q. **W**ELL; supposing the Necessity of a Good Guide to Youth, what next do you recommend?

A. The great danger of Youth arising from the impression of false Ideas, I think 'tis of the greatest Consequence to them, that either by their own timely Care, or of those, in whose Charge they are, their Minds be prepossess'd with Truth, that by this help, they may be put in the way of acting by Judgment, and not by Imagination and Sense.

Q. *Would you have them all Philosophers?*

A. I would have them all be Christian Philosophers: The Common Philosophy is little more than Ornamental, and when a Man is Master of it, so as to discourse learnedly, upon suppos'd Principles, of the Nature and Motion of all Created Beings, yet he may be still Ignorant of what it is to be a Good Christian; whence we see many great Speculators are little better than Practical Heathens: But the Christian Philo-

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Philosophy is absolutely Necessary for a Christian Life, and having no dependance on Humane Learning, hence all are capable of it; and tho' a Person be Ignorant of all that, which is celebrated as Science, so as to be pointed at, as One of no Education, yet he may be more advanc'd in Christianity, and be much nearer Heaven, than those, who have the Reputation of Wit and Learning. In this I would have Youth timely instructed; and for all other Sciences, let them take their chance; for the Concern is not so great.

*Q. What is the Principle of this Philosophy?*

*A.* Common Reason enlighten'd by Faith: Faith informs all Christians, that they have an Immortal Being, that their Souls, after this Life, are to enter into a State either of Happiness or Misery, which is to have no End. The same Faith, supported by Experience, gives them assurance, that this Life must soon end; that all, whatever belongs to this World, must perish; that whatever Advantages one may have, as to this present Being, they must all end with Life, and may be follow'd with Eternal Poverty and Misery. This is the only Principle of the Christian Philosophy; whoever says, *A Christian*, says; *One of this Principle*, and there is no need of more, than the



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the imprinting this well in Youth, for the rectifying their Judgments, and preparing them against those Infinite Delusions, to which they are unavoidably expos'd.

*Q. How will this rectifie the Judgments of Youth?*

*A.* It will be a Means of their judging of every thing according to the true Value; not taking their estimate from the general Opinion of the World, but from the Reference they have either to this Life or the next, and thus they will be provided against the general Imposture.

*Q. As how?*

*A.* If Youth be well possess'd, that the Being of the State to come is of an Everlasting durance; that they are to enter into this State, and, like it, never have end; if then they look for the Being of the Present Life in this Infinite Space of an Eternity to come, they will discover it so like an Imperceptible Atome, as to judge it Contemptible, in Comparison of that Everlasting durance before them: And hence they must necessarily fall into this Practical Conclusion; That since this Life is so very Inconsiderable, in Comparison of that, which is Eternal, there can be no great value set on the Goods of this Life: That its Evils are not much to be fear'd: That nothing can be truly Good, but as  
it

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it conduces to the Well-being of the State Eternal : That nothing can be truly Evil, but, as it prepares for Everlasting Misery.

Where the Judgment is settled in this Principle, it will take its Measures from it, of whatever is presented to its deliberation, and thus be arm'd against whatever is otherwise very powerful to deceive.

*Q. As in Particular?*

*A.* If Humane Glory be presented to it, which makes such Impressions on the Spirit of Man, and seems so Valuable, as to deserve all we can give for the Purchase; the Judgment thus prepar'd, regards not, how high it stands rated in the general esteem of Men; but bringing it to the Test, asks the Question, Will this Humane Glory contribute any thing to the Well-being of the Eternal State? Will it help to secure against Everlasting Evils? Will it help to the Possession of Everlasting Goods? And when, upon this Question being resolv'd, it appears, that notwithstanding the reputed Value of Humane Glory, there is nothing in it, that has any Relation to Eternity; that at the Hour of Death, it disappears like a Vapour; and that the highest degree of this Glory may be succeeded with Eternal Torments, Eternal Disgrace, and Everlasting Contempt of Devils; the Judgment concludes it

to

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to be falsly rated, that they are deceiv'd, who are very Sollicitous, or give much for the Purchase ; and that to do any thing for the obtaining it, which may be prejudicial to their Eternal State, and cut them off from the Hopes of Everlasting Happiness, can be nothing less than Blindness and Madness.

In the same manner, when all other things are offer'd to the Judgment, which from the general Opinion of Men, and their eagerness in desiring them, are suppos'd to be of great Value, such as Quality, State, Retinue, Riches, Possessions, Titles, Preferments, a Plentiful Table, Rich Cloaths, Diversifements, and Ease, the same Question is put again ; What Advantage these are in order to obtaining Eternal Happiness ? And the Resolution being, That all these are the Concern only of this Present Life, and no Advantage to the Life to come ; the Conclusion is fixt, That the Value of these Goods is only such, as is set upon them by Imagination, Custom, Humour or Sense, and that therefore they cannot be very desirable, where the Judgment is Christian, that is, regulated by Faith ; and that Common Reason, under this Influence, is bound to depart from the general Opinion, the World has of them.

For

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For since the Being of this Life is so very Inconsiderable a part of the Infinite and Everlasting Being, which we have begun, the Conveniencies, Satisfaction, and Goods of this Life, can be no more Considerable, than this Life is, in Comparison of Eternity. And what is this? 'Tis next to nothing: 'Tis not so much, as the Journey of half an Hour, in Comparison of a Settled Being we expect in the Place, to which we are going, of Fifty or Threescore Years. And as no Common Reason can be much concern'd, how such a Short Journey is perform'd; whether with great or no Retinue; in what Dress; how well provided; what is the Opinion of those, who look on, as they are passing by; what their Character may be suppos'd to be: So while Faith assures us, that this Life is no more, than a short Passage to an Eternal Abode, to which we are hasting, how can Reason, under this light, be much concern'd, as to those things, which regard the Passage only, and have no Relation to our Well-being in that Everlasting State, to which we are going? And if it be concern'd, is it not plain, that such is not the Reason of the Christian, but of the Sensual or Natural Man?

S E C T. III.

*Christian Ideas of such things, as  
are generally valued, as Tem-  
poral Advantages.*

FROM this Principle then of Faith, all Temporal Advantages lose much of their Common Value ; and they sink much lower, when the Judgment calling them over again, puts another Question ; That whereas in themselves they are no Advantage to the Eternal State, whether they be not a Disadvantage to it ? And when upon a due examination of the Matter, it appears ;

First, That Humane Glory inclines us to judge falsely of our selves, not measuring our selves by our selves, but by the Opinion others have of us, who know us not.

Secondly, That Riches either fill the Mind with an excessive Sollicitude, or serve to feed all manner of Extravagance.

Thirdly, That Quality puffs up the Mind with undue distinction of Self-esteem, and the Contempt of others, and exposes to a visible Injustice of taking pleasure in being the Object of an Admiration,

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tion, which arises from nothing, but the Corruption of Men.

Fourthly, That Preferment distracts the Heart, magnifying Earth, and lessening Heaven.

Fifthly, That all above Moderate Eating and Drinking, clogs the Mind, and indisposes it for all application to what is Eternal.

Sixthly, That Fine Cloaths soften the Mind, and gratifie a Vain Humour of seeking Admiration from what belongs not to it.

Seventhly, That immoderate Diversifements dissipate the Mind, and unfit it for what is Serious.

Eightly, That much Ease effeminates the Soul, indisposes it for great Attempts, and inclines it there to yield, where Victory is not to be gain'd, but with labour and difficulty.

Lastly, That however some of these reputed Advantages are not evil in themselves, but capable of being made Serviceable to Eternity; yet that generally the Best of them are great Temptations, great Obstacles to Salvation, so that 'tis very easie to be Lost, but very difficult to be Sav'd with them.

When, upon a due examination, I say, of the Matter, this appears to be the Case  
of

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of these so much valued Goods, the Judgment, influenc'd by Faith, sees it self oblig'd to pronounce, that they are much more to be Fear'd, than Desir'd ; that since this Life is only a short Passage, and the State, to which we are going, is Eternal, 'tis impossible, without doing violence to Reason, to judge those things Valuable or Desirable, which are only Conveniencies of a Moment, and put Eternity to the hazard : And hence it cannot but be Surpriz'd, to see a World of Christians, that is, of those, who believe all this, who believe that Eternity follows upon this Life : that this Life is granted them for making Provision for an Eternal Being, to be with the greatest eagerness seeking for the Goods of this Life, and be little concern'd for those of Eternity to come ; nay, to venture the Loss of Eternal Happiness, for the Conveniencies of the Present Moment, in which they are, which passes away in the Enjoyment, and by this shews them, that it will soon come to a period.

Now the true Cause of this Surprizing Madnes, being either a want of Faith, or a want of Reasoning upon what they believe, there can be no more effectual Preservative against it in Youth, than by an early and substantial Impression of this  
Prin-

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Principle of Christian Philosophy in them; since, by virtue of this, they will be taught to know the true Value of every thing, and not be so easily carried away by Sense, and Inclination, and the Opinion of the World; but judge that alone worthy of their Sollicitude and Desires, which has a reference to their Eternal Being; and be afraid of all that, which; pleasing only for the Present, is likely to defeat all the Hopes of their Future and Everlasting Happiness. This will make them despise all that, which is so generally admir'd; it will shew them the Folly of Vanity and State, the Emptiness of Titles, the Unreasonable Sollicitude of Covetousness, the Danger of Riches, the Snares of Company, the Treachery of Pleasures, the Destructive Consequences of Undue Divertisements and Ease: And these Ideas fram'd according to Truth, will establish their Minds against all that Deceit, which so much prevails even upon the Believing World, and carries them on contrary to the Dictates of Reason and Faith.

S E C T.



S E C T. IV.

*Great Choice is to be had in Books  
and Company.*

**B**UT this Christian Principle meeting which a general Contradiction in Nature, and the World, which are censur'd by it of Rashness and Folly; it will not be enough, to convince Youth of its Reasonableness, and of the great Interest they have in making it the Rule of their Practice; but due Means must be us'd, not only for establishing it in their Minds, but likewise frequently to revive it, so to keep it up in a Vigorous and Active State, and make it capable of that Conduct, which depends upon it. For this Principle is like those of all other Sciences, which if not quickned by due Reflection and Exercise, will soon grow useless. Hence follows the Necessity of frequent Reading such Books, as strike the Mind with the Sense of Eternity, and lay before it the short durance of the Present Life, and of whatever belongs to it. And such Company ought to be made choice of, whose Conversation may be profitable and entertaining, but free from all kind  
of

of Irreligious Railery and Prophane-  
ness.

Without this Choice, in Reading and  
Conversing the Best Principles, will do  
but little Service to Youth ; for tho' their  
Reason may be convinc'd, what is best to  
be done ; yet it will soon come to lose  
its Power of Acting, and this Light will  
be obscur'd by a Life of Darkness. No-  
thing therefore ought to be more careful-  
ly avoided by Youth, than those Books,  
whose Subject is either Vicious, Prophane,  
or Romantick ; for tho' the Reading such  
Parts of them, as are Innocent, cannot be  
Charg'd as Criminal ; yet 'tis not possible  
to grow Fond of them in general, but  
the Mind must be injur'd by it, in receiv-  
ing false Impressions of things ; conceiv-  
ing great Thoughts of what is Vain and  
Foolish, and becoming insensibly so  
soften'd, in regard of what is Light and  
Sensual, that Temporal things will be the  
Object of its Admiration ; and what is be-  
liev'd Eternal, will be little more regard-  
ed, than as if the Creed were the result  
of a Dream.

The like Care, and even more, must be  
us'd for declining such Conversation, as  
may be prejudicial to them. If they grow  
in love with such Company, as are Vi-  
cious, tho' with a present abhorrence of  
their

their Vice, yet I can no longer entertain any Hopes of them, since the strength of this Contagion is too well known, to expect any lasting health of Mind from those, who are fond of such Pestiferous Air. If they strike in with other Company, whose Conversation is generally Vain, whose Business is Gaming, Divertisements, and Idleness, whose Spirit is wholly worldly, their danger is here so great, that I look on them, as walking on a Precipice, and expect every Day to hear of their Fall. For whatever good Principles they may carry with them, yet these will be soon effaced, whilst such Conversation will make Impressions in them of all kinds of worldly Passions, their Minds will be corrupted with Vanity and Idleness, nothing will relish, that is Serious; and their most desir'd Improvements will be in those things, which is to render them acceptable to their Company. Being work'd by degrees into this Disposition, who can say, what the Effect will be? But certainly, it is no less than a Miracle, if a short time does not shew them to be averse to all kind of Discipline, to despise Religion, to set up for Modish Wits, in Ridiculing all that is Holy, and to be Masters in Gaming, Intemperance and Vice.

## S E C T. V.

*Danger makes this Choice Necessary.*

Q. **B**R this way of Cautioning, you will bring Youth to the rigour of Recluses, and under the excessive Care of keeping them out of danger, will make them either Prisoners or Hermits.

A. When Persons live in Infected Places, the Concern of Life obliges them to more than ordinary Retirement, and to retrench very much of their usual Conversation, without regard to any Ties of Acquaintance, Friendship or Relation. Now if Immorality and Prophaneness be grown so Epidemical, that Eternal Happiness is as much as danger from them, as Life from the Plague, are Youth, or other Christians, impos'd upon, when they are advis'd to be reserv'd in their Conversation, to make Choice of their Company, and by a sort of Retirement, to avoid all those, whose ill Example is likely to be the Ruin of their Souls; Is this any more, than in their Diet, to bid them not eat what is Poysonous, and in their Journeys, not to venture into Quick-sands? Where there

there is a Belief of Eternity, and a Claim to Reason, one would think, it could be made no Matter of Complaint, to bid them have a Care of what is evidently destructive to their Eternal Interest.

Do you but reflect upon those of your Acquaintance, who having been soberly Educated, are now under the Guilt of Notorious Immoralities, and Scandalous Disorders, and tell me, if Ill Company has not been their Ruin? And amongst all the Youth, which you at present know to be undisciplin'd, and to take very unwarrantable Liberties, has not Ill Company Debauch'd them? If then Ill Company has so much Corruption, Poyson and Infection in it, if it has given such Proof of its Destructive Power, is there not reason to advise all Youth, who are yet unacquainted with the Snare, to keep at a distance from such Dangers, and not to venture, upon any Confidence of their own strength, where so many have found their Ruin the Proof of the like Presumption?

This Caution then which I give, is neither to make Prisoners or Hermits, but such as God himself prescribes to his People; such as all, who pretend to Virtue or Discipline, require strictly to be observ'd; such as our Natural Corruption makes Necessary for all, and more particularly

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cularly for Youth; and the Neglect of it cannot fail of being Fatal to the best Purposes here, and to whatever is believ'd of the Happiness of a future State.

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S E C T. VI.

*They are to be Moderate and Discreet in Divertisements. Direction as to Games, Plays, Balls.*

**Q.** *Then if Youth are to provide for the Life to come, they must renounce Divertisements, and all the Satisfactions of the present Life?*

**A.** No, I press it not so far; they are bound, upon this Principle, absolutely to renounce only that part of them, which is inconsistent with future Happiness, and makes them unfit for coming to the Possession of it: And the Condition is not unreasonable, since 'tis to require of them no more, than to be so wise in the Management of a Moment, as not to exclude themselves from the Happiness of Eternity. Whoever believes such a Happiness cannot dispence with the Condition, but

by renouncing their Reason ; and therefore the observance of what is prescrib'd, is the only Means of clearing those, who have Faith, from the imputation of Madness.

*Q. How far then are Divertisements, &c. allowable ?*

*A.* Divertisements are not only allowable in themselves, but even necessary, if the due bounds are not exceeded, as they are intended a Relief to Nature, and by this Relief, to give it breath, and make it fit for Business. But if Persons, under the cover of giving Relaxation to their Spirits, grow so Fond of what should be only Divertisements, as to make them the Business of the Day, of the Year, and of Life, to be uneasie upon every Disappointment, to spend more in them than is agreeable to their Circumstances, and much less to that Charity, which should be the Spirit of their Profession, to live without Discipline, to be a general disturbance to the Order of Family, to be drawn into dangerous Company, to dislike what is Serious, to neglect what ought to be their Business, to love Nothing but Idleness; who can then plead for or approve such a Method, since this is a Disposition of Mind so disagreeable to the Gospel we profess, that as it must be concluded to be within one

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Step of Vice, so likewise it must be own'd, that where this is the Method of Life, whether in Youth or more advanc'd Years, there can be nothing expected but Ruin both to Soul and Body?

While therefore Divertisements are allow'd in Youth, and these are expos'd, like other things Necessary for Life, to a most dangerous Excess, there is an absolute Necessity of being Moderate in them, that so what is intended for a Help, may not be abus'd to Ruin. As far as they are an Encouragement to Industry, or a Seasonable Prescription for Health, there is a sufficient Warrant for them; but whenever they begin to gain so far upon the Affections, as to carry the Mind with a certain Violence upon them, and to esteem them as the Happiness of Life, there is then as pressing a Necessity of Self-denial, in giving a check to such Desires, as there is in regard of other things that are Criminal; since an Indulgence in them so easily becomes Fatal to all the Purposes of a Christian Life. And those, who will not give themselves this Trouble, will find the Punishment of their Neglect in the strength of a growing Evil, which cannot afterwards be tolerated without Impiety, nor be overcome, but with Infinite Labour.



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*Q. Is there any Choice to be made in Divertisements?*

*A.* There can be no true Concern for a Well-being in this World, or the next, if this choice be not made, by declining those, which answer not the Ends of Recreation, but with hazard to the Morality and Discipline of a Christian Life. Some are more dangerous than others, but all are so in their Excess. But this danger being not generally to be measur'd from the things in themselves, but from the Particular Circumstances, from the Constitution and Inclination of Persons, hence the determination in this Choice, must depend upon the Observance of what seems most powerful in engaging the Affections, and cannot be follow'd without danger of Excess.

*Q. What is the Excess to be apprehended?*

*A.* I have already hinted it : It is that of giving more Time and Money to Recreation, than belongs to it; it is that of giving the Heart and Affections to it, which are both great Injustices, and are inseparably attended with a Neglect of Temporal and Eternal Duties.

*Q. Is there not danger, in all kinds of Divertisements, of falling into this Excess?*

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*A.* There is; and therefore due Care is to be us'd in all for preventing it.

*Q.* *As how?*

*A.* By making Lines not to be pass'd, in regard of Time and Money. These Two Heads ought to be seriously Consider'd, as to what may be Reasonably allow'd to Recreation; and then a steady Resolution is to see the Determination Executed, without admitting Dispensations, which, if allow'd, will soon defeat whatever Purposes can be made. I have seen the Practice of this, and so many Advantages of it, that I must set it down, as absolutely Beneficial and Practicable; and I have known so many Miscarriages of those, who would put their Liberty under no such restraint, that the Discretion of experienc'd Years is not to be trusted, much less the Rashness of Youth, as sufficient to stand against the dangers, that too often occur in this Matter.

*Q.* *This may help to regulate in Games; but what must be done in other Recreations, as in Plays, Dancing, Company, Musick, &c?*

*A.* If well apply'd, it may be a Direction in these too, since generally all Excesses are accompanied with a greater expence of Time and Money, than will probably be allow'd in the Christian's Accounts: For can you think, that such Christians, as  
make

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as make these Entertainments a general Business of the Day, will be prepar'd to give an Account of their Stewardship; when those Two Considerable Talents of Time and Money, entrusted with them, instead of being employ'd in their Master's Service, have been principally prostituted to the Support of their own Idle Humour? The Omissions of what they might have done, by the better use of them, are Infinite; and if, upon Summing up the Account, it shall appear, that there has not only been an Omission of the good they might have done, but likewise, that the Gifts of God have been turn'd against the Giver; in promoting what has been displeasing to him, the Sentence cannot be very favourable in this ill Administration; and whence must the Miscarriage be dated, but from the ill Management of Time and Money, which by a better use of them, might have been prevented?

There are other particular Reasons obliging Christians to be watchful, in regard of these Entertainments; because in Plays there is such a Mixture of Immorality, and Prophaneness, that the Stage seems to be a School fitted for the Corruption of Youth; so that 'tis impossible to frequent it often, but they must soon become Skill'd in all that belongs to Lewdness and Irreligion.

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Publick Balls, I fear, are seldom more Innocent ; where by Whispers, Particular Addresses, Manag'd Gestures, &c. there is as great a Commerce, both in setting on foot, and promoting what is wicked, as the Devil can desire, for Corrupting what is Innocent, overthrowing what is Weak, surprizing the Indiscreet, and bringing the most Establish'd into danger.

Something of this, I fear, there is in Musick-meetings, and in other Conversation, with the addition of many Sinful Extravagancies: And I do not only say, that all these Kinds of Entertainments are to be avoided, as far as they are evidently Sinful ; for without this the Profession of Christianity is Vain ; but that Youth ought to be under a more rigorous Restraint, in never being allow'd a Familiarity with those things, which are so easily abus'd, are so dangerous in their Excess, and so destructive to their Admirers.

*Q. Will you not then at all allow of Plays and Balls?*

*A.* The Love of them, or Constant Practice in going to them, cannot be allow'd for the Reasons now hinted ; but as for seeing a Play now and then, especially such as are not Offensive to Morality or Religion, I could permit this Indulgence

to Youth, if I saw this would be an Encouragement to what is more Serious, or might be judg'd proper for less'ning that Esteem, which otherwise might grow to an Excess, upon an absolute Prohibition.

But as for Balls, I am not Inclind to be so Favourable; because to such, as have any part in them, the hazard is always uncertain, and there is no Security under the greatest Reserve; so that tho' every one, that appears in those Meetings, is not to be suspected of design, yet Corruption is too general to venture Youth there, where the danger is great, without the Proposal of the least Good. Not that I disapprove of all Dancing, especially in a Family, and with Persons of known Principles, and with a due observance of regular Hours; for this may be a seasonable Encouragement to cheerful Spirits; but only then Condemn it, when there are just grounds to Suspect it, as a Snare to Youth; and who can tell me, it is not so in all Publick and Mixt Assemblies, where there is no other Order, but of Musick and Motion, and even this is a Temptation to Idleness and Disorder, with a Thousand Circumstances of Indiscretion, Affectation, or Malice, to inflame it?

## S E C T. VII.

*Sloth and Idleness to be carefully avoided.*

**Q.** *E*Xperience is too evident a Proof of what you say ; but can you prescribe no other Means for avoiding this General Mischief, besides shewing the danger ?

**A.** This is enough to those, who are to act by Reason ; but Inclination being in Youth too strong for Reason, there is a Necessity of some other Help ; and the most General, as likewise most Effectual of all Humane Means, I think, is that of finding some Business for the Employment of Youth, so to preserve them from Idleness.

There can be no greater Preparation for all Mischief, than to have Nothing to do, and to be at a loss, how to spend the Time : This is a Circumstance not to be wish'd to the worst of Enemies : It is a Disposition too evil in the Best ; but in Youth, whose Restless Activity of Spirit will not permit them to lye still, *Having nothing to do*, is almost inseparable in them from *Doing evil*.

This being the unhappy Temper of these Years, it ought to be the great Con-  
cern

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cern of such, as have the Charge of Youth, and likewise of Youth for themselves, to see they be not Idle, and to have always some Business, which is to be the Employment of the Day. To effect this, Youth ought to be so bred up, as to be taught to love Business; and if they discover themselves to be affected to Idleness, and averse to Employment, they have no Remedy, but to use violence with Nature, by Endeavours to overcome Inclination, and force it to a compliance with this Indispensible Rule.

To do this well, the First Care must be, to fix a due Hour, for quitting the Bed in the Morning; for, excepting upon the Demands of Health, I can have no Confidence of their doing much to the purpose, who in their Youth indulge themselves to immoderate Sleep in the Morning. For such a Custom is the Effect of Laziness; and where there is not Resolution enough to overcome this, what can be expected from them, when the whole Practice of a Christian Life, consists in a constant and vigorous Opposition against Nature, Self-love, and the World?

When this Point is gain'd, there must be then some constant Business of the Day; for tho' this, in great numbers, may not be necessary for Bread; yet it is otherwise

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therwise necessary for all, to secure them against the infinite Dangers of an Idle Life; so that if some are to work, that they may not Starve, others are to work, that they may not perish Everlastingly; and as this is the better Motive, so it ought to press with more strength, and not allow of more Dispensations, than in the Omission was to be follow'd with the Danger of wanting Bread.

If the Mischiefs of Idleness were duly apprehended, a little Serious Contrivance would soon find ways for preventing them. Both Sexes, even in their Youth, are capable of variety of Employments, which are necessary on this General Head, and otherwise Honourable and Profitable: What betwixt the Needle and the Book, all may find such Business, which might be a present Improvement, in fitting them for the State, to which they are design'd; and giving them many considerable Advantages above their Neighbours, in order to this Life, and the next.

For it being one of the greatest Misfortunes to Men and Women, after they are settled in the World, not to know how to employ their Time with any Satisfaction at home; and that this is the first and general Occasion of their seeking for that abroad, which they cannot find within



within doors; that hence they grow fond of Expensive Divertisements, of Idle Company, and of Persons that draw them into many weighty Inconveniencies, to the Ruin of their Estates, Neglect of Family, and engaging them in the most unwarrantable Practices inconsistent with their Eternal Good: This, I say, being one of the greatest Misfortunes, it must be hence set down, as one of the greatest Advantages of Youth, that they know how to fill up their time at home, and with Satisfaction to employ the Day; for that by this Means they will not only be deliver'd from the Dangers of Idleness in their youthful Years, but likewise throughout the whole Course of their Lives; and thus be freed from those infinite Temptations, to which they would be otherwise expos'd, to the evident hazard both of their Temporal and Eternal Concerns.

This Advantage is so great, as to Temporals, that upon a due Estimate of things, he who comes to an Estate of Five Hundred a Year, and by knowing how to employ his Time, is fenc'd against Idleness, may be justly reckon'd in a much better Condition, than he who has the Inheritance of Five Thousand, but is expos'd to the Consequences of an Idle Life, by knowing no way, with any Satisfaction, to be busied at home.

And

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And as to Spirituall, the Matter admits of no proportion; so that while an Industrious Man, of whatever Condition, is easily put in the way of Salvation; those, who give themselves up to Idleness, are out of that way, and without an entire Change, give no place for Hopes of their Eternal Good.

Whence I cannot but look on Christian Parents, as taking a very wrong Method, whose great Sollicitude is to provide their Children with a plentiful Fortune, but are little concern'd to give them such an Education, as to teach them to employ well their Time; since an Industrious Spirit is so much more valuable in Sons, than a great Estate, and more to the purpose in Daughters, than a Portion of Thousands: Nothing being enough for Idleness, which is ever upon the Waste; and a little being enough for Industry, which is ever upon Improving.

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### S E C T. VIII.

#### *Direction as to Cloaths.*

**Q. W**hat say you now, as to Cloaths and Dressing, for in this Youth are very much concern'd?

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A. Custom has gain'd so far in this Point, that, I fear, Youth is not dispos'd to hear the Rigorous Truth, without reproaching it of Bigotry; and therefore considering them as weak, I am oblig'd to temper it. Hence, tho' Cloathing, in strictness, ought to answer the demands only of Necessity and Modesty, yet in compliance, I will own something to be allow'd to Decency; and this is a word of that latitude, that there are none, tho' the most Extravagant, who will not, by their own favourable Expositions of it, justify all they do.

However, for the better bringing it within Bounds, I must make some Exceptions: And, First, Cannot allow that to be done for Decency in Dressing, where the general Sollicitude is upon the Extremity of the Mode, and where the Fancy is strongly bent upon such things, as make a Flutter, and cannot fail of being pointed at by all, who come within sight.

Secondly, That cannot be set down under this Head, when Persons growing in love with themselves, make it a general Business of their Thoughts and Time to consider, what will best become the Clay, and make it as much Admir'd by others, as it is in its own Eyes.

Thirdly,

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Thirdly, That cannot be allow'd on the account of Decency, when Persons set themselves out in Cloaths above their Condition, and are more expensive in them, than their Circumstances will in justice allow.

All that being excluded, which falls under these Exceptions, something may be then granted upon the account of being Cleanly and Decent; and this must be understood in some Latitude, because the Matter is not of that Niceness, that all beyond such a Point is an Excess, and yet is so Nice, that 'tis easie running into an Excess.

And because this Excess is so Natural to Youth, therefore it must be advisable in them, to be ever jealous of themselves, and be watchful in moderating all such Inclinations. This I would have them do, principally upon a Motive of Virtue; because doing otherwise, is in favour of Vanity, and opens a way to many dangerous Consequences; whence it happens to many, that open Ruin is the Sequel only of this indulg'd Lightness. But, where Virtue is not so perswasive, I would have them there turn Vanity against it self, and oppose it with its own Arms; that is, upon the Motive of Vanity, to oppose the very Inclinations it suggests. For since there is  
such

such a Deformity in Pride, as to render it Contemprible and Odious to all Observers, those who are Sollicitous to be esteem'd, must let this Sollicitude give a Check to all that, which, instead of raising Admirers, will most certainly bring them into Contempt; especially with those whose Judgment is above all to be valued; that is, with Pious, Sober, and Judicious Men. For in regard of these, all that is Vain and Light has such an ill Aspect, that where-ever they observe any Affected Flutter or Foppishness, they are presently struck with dislike, and cannot help fearing the inside of such Persons to be Answerable to what appears without, and that there must be a Lightness either in their Heads or their Hearts, which makes them such Studied Admirers of themselves, and yet to seek Esteem by that, which raises an Aversion against them. Must not then Vanity it self be so reserv'd, as to cut off all that, which can be suspected of Vanity? Virtue ought to do it; and Vanity will do it, where it is not Blind.

## S E C T. IX.

*Direction as to Diet.*

Q. **L**ET me now have your Thoughts as to Diet.

A. Were I to have my Wish, I would have Youth Bred up and Accustom'd to Plain Diet, and Regular Hours observ'd in it. The Reason is, because such as know how to be satisfied with Plain Diet, are better fitted to submit to all the Turns of Fortune, are deliver'd from that Niceness, which makes Persons uneasie in themselves, and very troublesom to others, and are in a great part out of danger of falling under the Reproach of *S. Paul* against the *Philippians*, of making a God of their Belly, which few love too well, but 'tis attended with such an Excess of Self-love, as to be Concern'd for no body but themselves, and with a Neglect of the most Substantial Duties, that belong to a Christian Life.

As the Diet ought to be Plain, so the Hours of Eating ought to be Regular; that is, I would have Youth be Contented with what is set before them on the Table, and not have their Particular and Private Preparations made for them; I would not have

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have their Broths wait on them in the Morning before they quit their Beds, nor their Servants be Cooking for them, when they should be going to Rest; for as a Custom of this must certainly prove Prejudicial to Health, and by degrees make very Humoursom Stomachs; so it being in it self Irregular, it cannot fail of bringing Persons into a Contempt of Discipline, and they will certainly be disorderly in other things, as they are in this: And what is this, but to say, that such Persons are not qualifying themselves for the Care of a Family, but are most likely to be Careless in whatever State they undertake, and by their Disorders to bring all to Ruin; for it cannot be expected, they should be Good Rulers, who know not what it is to live by Rule.

As to what belongs to Drinking, all Christians being oblig'd to Temperance, this ought to be most strictly observ'd by Youth, both in Consideration of this World, and the next; there being nothing that can so truly make them useless in this Life, or put them out of all way of providing for the Happiness of a future State, as Drinking to an Excess. Wherefore the best Rule for Youth in this Point, is to decline whatever it be that leads to it, by not allowing in themselves a Custom  
of

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of drinking Wine, or other strong Drinks, either at Table, or other times ; for tho' a Glass at a Meal, is not to be Censur'd of Intemperance ; yet since this, generally speaking, cannot be Necessary for them, it must be interpreted no better, than indulging themselves in an ill Custom, or doing it for the Love of the Drink ; and neither of these is allowable in Youth, since the Consequence of such Indulgence, or such Love, is to be dreaded, when Inclination, strengthen'd by Custom and Years, will meet with so many Occasions and Provocations, to encourage it in taking greater Liberties. Neither is the Plea of Necessity or Health easily to be admitted, since this is often taken up only to gratifie Inclination, and Health is seldom more prejudic'd, than by this deceitful Expedient, which undertakes to preserve it. Both Sexes can give proof of this hurtful Flattery, and I wish both would be more watchful against it.

What I speak here, is only in Relation to *Custom* ; and for never to touch Wine or Strong Drink is too great a Rigour, to be generally Recommended; and some Occasions offer, which there may be as much Affection in declining, as there is Weakness in accepting others : These must be manag'd by Discretion, which is to distinguish



guish by the Consideration of Circumstances ; but with regard to this General Principle, That a Custom of Drinking any thing above Small-beer, is not to be look'd upon as a Matter of indifferency in Youth, but of Consequence, and to be consider'd as dangerous. Whence the Judgment is obvious, to be made of those who join with disorderly Company, are frequent at their Meetings, and are overcome by Importunity to do what they cannot otherwise approve ; for these are in the High-way to Ruin ; and this must be their Fate, if they make not a timely Retreat, by a resolute withdrawing themselves from all that Conversation, which they find the Occasion of their Mischief. I wish I could prescribe something more easie to them ; but knowing the general weakness of our Nature, and more especially in Youth, no such Expedients can be suggested, but what, upon the trial, will soon appear ineffectual ; it being a less Difficulty, wholly, and at once, to Quit such Occasions, than to be Moderate in them : And therefore, as for such, as cannot perswade themselves to follow this Advice, I look upon their Case so desperate, that it must be no less than Miracle, if they are not lost.

## S E C T. X.

*General Principle, on which these Instructions are grounded.*

**Q.** **Y**O U have gone thro' the chief Heads, in which Youth are principally Concern'd; and tho' I cannot disapprove what you prescribe, yet you cannot but be Sensible, that Considering the Common Methods of the World, it will be all Censur'd of Severity: Therefore, pray suggest to me some General Principle, upon which the whole is grounded, and may serve both to Confirm it, and Answer Objections.

**A.** I have prescrib'd nothing, but what has Particular Reasons to support it, and sufficient, upon a review, to rescue it from the Censures you apprehend. But however to satisfy your demand, I have this Principle to offer; That Christians ought to live according to the Spirit of the Gospel, which is the Christian's Rule. Whence it cannot be judg'd less than Necessary, that those, who, by their Age, ought to prepare for settling in the World, should be train'd up in a Method conformable to that Spirit, that so they may know how to live by it.

Now

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Now whoever, upon due Reading of the Gospel, reflects, What its Spirit is, must soon discover, That the Spirit of the Gospel, is a Spirit of Humility and Meekness, a Spirit of Self-denial, a Spirit, that teaches the Contempt of the World, with all its Pleasures, Riches, and Greatness; a Spirit, that thirsts after God, is Sollicitous to do his Will, and desires to be united with him for all Eternity. This is the Spirit of the Gospel, because it is the Spirit of Christ, and the Life of Christ was conform'd to it.

The Followers of Christ being to live by his Spirit, tell me, if it be reasonable, they should be flatter'd or encourag'd in such ways as are contrary to it? Would not you think your Children ill treated, if putting them out to be taught a becoming Meen, they should be taught every Day to hang down their Heads, to look a-squint, to sit Crooked, to stand Cross-legg'd, and to be perswaded to admire and love all the most deform'd Postures? You see, how unreasonable this would be.

That I may not concur in a much greater Absurdity, of which this mention'd is only a Shadow, I prescribe to Youth such a Method, as may fit them for that Life, which, as Christians, ought ever to be their Practice; and caution them against such

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such things, which must necessarily make them unfit to live according to what they are to profess. And in this I know my Cause to be so good, that instead of being Sollicitous to answer Objections, I take upon me the other Part, and call the World and all its Admirers to an Account for their Profess'd Absurdity: And what I arraign here, is the Believing Part of it, such, who say they have a Faith of an Eternity to come, that Christ is their Teacher, and the Gospel their Rule.

Of these I demand an account, Why they encourage Pride of Life, Vanity and Ambition in all its Branches, in Cloaths, Furniture, Retinue, &c? Why they set so great a Value upon these, teach all to admire, desire, and seek them, to Esteem them as the Happiness of Life, to Rate every Body according to the share they have of them; when, according to the Gospel, they are bound to believe all these to be dangerous in themselves, to be sinful if lov'd, to be the ready way to Eternal Misery; and that Humility is that, which above all renders a Soul acceptable to God, and prepares it for Everlasting Happiness?

Of these I demand an account, Why a Universal Excess in all kinds is approv'd and encourag'd, when the Gospel recommends

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mends a Universal Moderation and Temperance?

Why Riches and Humane Greatness are rated so high; when the Gospel sets the Value on Poverty of Spirit, and the Contemtable Things of this World?

Why Self-love, and doing their own Will, is so much encourag'd; when Self-denial is the First Principle of the Gospel?

Why a Life of Idleness and Pleasure is so much authoriz'd and approv'd; when the Gospel calls to Watching, Praying, Fasting, Labouring, and shews the Broad Way to lead to Death?

Let the Believing World, those, who read and believe the Gospel, answer me as to these Points: Let them take their own Method into Consideration, and they will soon discover the Principle, on which these Instructions are built; they will answer their own Objections, and see the reason, why I press Humility, Moderation, Temperance, &c. to Youth, is, that they may live according to what they are bound to profess, and not blindly run into the guilt of their Folly and Madness.

Those then, who make Objections, may hence know, that my Concern for answering, is not so great, as my Pity is for them;

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them ; since, I fear, a Real Infidelity, or a Judgment blinded with Habitual Corruption, is at the bottom of such Censures, which are levell'd against the Gospel, by raising a Scandal against those Methods, which are Necessary for bringing a Life to the Model of the Gospel.

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S E C T. XI.

*Natural Corruption makes these Instructions Necessary for such as desire to live Christians.*

**W**herefore I recommend the Instructions here given to Youth, as built upon the Principles of God's Sacred Word ; and, upon that consideration, judge them so Necessary, that I cannot but apprehend such as disapproving these, take contrary Methods, to depart from the Principles and Spirit of the Gospel ; and if any are of another Mind, I would not, upon any account, have them put the Decision to their own Experiment ; upon which, however, I should be willing to venture, for the proof of the other side.

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I leave them therefore to Youth, apprehending no other Dislike in them, but what arises from the difficulty of the Practice. But this cannot be helpt; for Nature being inclin'd to Evil; it must be averse to all such Methods, as are proper for correcting its Inclinations. But either this difficulty must be overcome, or they must be left to the Consequences of their own Corruption, which will be so severe, as to be the late Conviction of their Mad-ness, who would rather venture them, than undertake the trouble of their Cure.

I wish therefore they would consider this important Affair in time, and remember, that whatever Evil Inclinations they bring with them into the World, they are so many Obstacles to Salvation, and either these must be master'd, or they be Miserable; for they cannot serve or gratifie these, and be the Servants of God.

Let them then look into themselves; for if they are inclin'd to Pride, desire to be Admir'd, seek this by their Dressing, Discourses and Affectation: If they are inclin'd to Sloth and Laziness; if they are of a Fond and Amorous Temper; if they love Gaming, Dancing, and Balls, are pleas'd with ill Hours, or with Idle Company, whose Conversation is light and dangerous,

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dangerous, whose Discourse is disedifying, whose Example leads to Evil: If their Temper be Rough and Obstinate, such as dislikes Advice, and cannot bear Reproof: If they are of a Giddy Disposition, such as peaceably gives ear to all Advice, and bears Reproof, but lets nothing weigh upon them, longer than they are hearing: If their Temper be Insincere, if Subject to Romancing and Lying; if to Whispering and Gossiping: If they are Fretful, Peevish, and subject to Contention: If too easie in admitting Dislikes, and taking Exceptions: If inclin'd to too much Curiosity, to be prying into, and busying themselves with what belongs not to them: If they are of too hard a Temper, and Coverous, or too Prodigal in their Expences; if subject to any Excess in Eating or Drinking, or too Nice in gratifying their Appetite: If they find these or other Inclinations in their Temper, that lead to Sin, they may be assured, they have so much Work upon their Hands; that they cannot live as Christians, if they bring not all under the Command of Reason and Faith; that the time of doing it with most ease, is in their Youthful Years, since all Corruption grows more Obstinate and Difficult in its Cure, by whatever favour is shewn it. That therefore they are under a Necessity, as they



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they desire to have Peace of Conscience here, or to be Happy hereafter, of good Advice, as to the Methods they are to take: If these Instructions do not please, I heartily wish they may find better, for answering this General End of Christianity; tho' I cannot but fear, if they look for Easier, they will be in danger of never coming to it.

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### E R R A T A.

**P**Age 24. l. 21. for *much as danger*, read *much in danger*.

The

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FINIS.